Employment growth continues in Edmonton

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Employment in the **Edmonton** region has steadily increased since January. In April, employment rose by approximately 6,100 positions in the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), with gains entirely made up of full-time positions. Employment gains in Edmonton were concentrated in manufacturing, professional services and hospitality.

The unemployment rate fell from 8.4% in March 2017 to 8.1% in April 2017 as the number of new jobs outweighed ongoing growth in the labour force. The unemployment rate for Calgary in April 2017 was 9.3%, unchanged from March 2017.

Labour Force Survey Results – Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area
Three-month moving average – seasonally adjusted

	Apr 2016	Mar 2017	**Apr 2017**	Mar 2017 to Apr 2017	Apr 2016 to Apr 2017	Mar 2017 to Apr 2017	Apr 2016 to Apr 2017
	(000)	(000)	**(000)**	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1117.0	1131.1	**1132.8**	1.7	15.8	0.2	1.4
Labour force	840.9	826.5	**829.9**	3.4	-11.0	0.4	-1.3
Employment	781.6	756.7	**762.8**	6.1	-18.8	0.8	-2.4
Unemployment	59.3	69.8	**67.2**	-2.6	7.9	-3.7	13.3
Unemployment rate (%)	7.1	8.4	**8.1**	-0.3	1.0	...	...
Participation rate (%)	75.3	73.1	**73.3**	0.2	-2.0	...	...
Employment rate (%)	70.0	66.4	**67.3**	0.4	-2.7	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was largely unchanged in April with a gain of 2,900 full-time jobs offset by a loss of 3,200 part-time positions. However, Alberta's unemployment rate dropped from 8.4% to 8.1% as fewer people were searching for work in April.

In April, **Canada's** overall employment saw an increase of 3,200 positions with gains in education, health care and logistics; and employment decreases in business services and hospitality. Canada's unemployment rate was down from at 6.7% in March 2017 to 6.5% in April 2017 due to fewer individuals seeking work in Canada.

Significance

While there are clear signs that the Edmonton labour market is improving, Edmonton's job losses during 2016 in the goods producing sector demonstrates that the region was not immune to the impact of decreased oil prices. Gains in April 2016 in full-time employment suggest employers are now more confident about adding to their workforce.

Over the first half of 2017, employment in Edmonton will continue to grow in the manufacturing and professional services. However, the unemployment rate is unlikely to move much lower than April's 8.1% reading as the local labour force continues to expand.

Growth in the working age population, up 1.4% from April 2016 to April 2017, has been a key factor in addressing labour and skill shortages that began to emerge in Edmonton prior to the downturn in energy prices. With Edmonton's unemployment rate well above the national average, net migration into the region has slowed down, especially when compared to the volumes seen over the period from 2010 to 2014. This will slow the growth in the working age population over the course of 2017.

Limitations

Since employment trends, particularly in the full-time category, tend to lag behind developments in overall economic activity, they are a better indicator of past, rather than current, conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force values for the Edmonton region, an approach that sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

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